

And what are we doing about it? Nothing. Every day innocent kids are victimized on peer-to-peer file-trading software and our inaction allows them to walk right into the trap set by sexual predators. The time to act has come.

I urge my colleagues to cosponsor my bill, H.R. 2885, so that we can move forward in protecting our kids online.

AWARDING CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL TO PRESIDENT JOSE MARIA AZNAR

(Mr. GIBBONS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GIBBONS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to again encourage my colleagues to cosponsor H.R. 2131, a resolution that will bestow President of the Government of Spain, Jose Maria Aznar, with the Congressional Gold Medal.

Shortly after the September 11 attacks on the United States, President Aznar made the following comment: "Our battle is a battle for the same ideas, for the same freedoms, for the same society and civilizations, and we will share all those efforts as long as it is necessary."

President Aznar of Spain has stood by the United States and, despite heavy political pressure, has never wavered from his staunch commitment to the ideals of freedom, liberty and democracy.

I urge my fellow Members to join me and over 100 cosponsors of H.R. 2131, a bill to award the Congressional Gold Medal to President Aznar. Join us in honoring a man who is a great leader in global democracy, a great leader in the war on terrorism, a notable ally of the United States, and a champion of freedom.

IN OPPOSITION TO LATEST NEW GOVERNMENT ENTITLEMENT

(Mr. PENCE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PENCE. Mr. Speaker, earlier this week I came to the House floor to announce my opposition to the largest new entitlement since 1965, the Medicare prescription drug bill that we will consider this week. As my voice has weakened, strong voices in opposition have emerged, including the venerable Heritage Foundation which has been a beacon of limited government for over three decades. And today, the editorial page of the Wall Street Journal in a piece entitled "Entitlements Are Forever" makes a powerful case that Congress should reconsider before we create this massive new government entitlement. The Wall Street Journal says the GOP's Medicare bill trades certain spending for speculative reform. The bottom line is that the bill would add a universal drug entitlement to a

largely unreformed Medicare program and warns of fiscal disaster. They conclude that Republicans are offering the certainty of trillions in new entitlements in return for a mere promise of future reform and that is too expensive a gamble for principled conservatives to support.

With my very last breath, I would say, "I agree." Oppose the Medicare prescription drug entitlement.

HEALTH SAVINGS ACCOUNTS

(Mr. WILSON of South Carolina asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the conference report for H.R. 1, an historic bill that will include the creation of health savings accounts, a breakthrough program that gives control back to patients. The voluntary health savings accounts provide care that is affordable, flexible and portable. They restore the doctor-patient relationship, allowing Americans the freedom to choose their own doctor and their own care. Also, contributions, earnings and medical payments from these accounts are all tax-free.

Health savings accounts will lower health insurance costs for millions of Americans and allow for price competition of doctor and hospital services. Moreover, these accounts stay with a person throughout their lives as they are portable from one job to the other. They also can be used during retirement to pay for retiree health care, Medicare expenses and prescription drugs.

I strongly encourage my colleagues to support health savings accounts by voting in favor of H.R. 1 and give health care freedom to millions of Americans.

In conclusion, God bless our troops. We will not forget September 11.

IN HONOR OF RECENT BRONZE STAR RECIPIENTS

(Mr. BOOZMAN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. Speaker, I recently had the honor of handing out Bronze Star Medals to 58 World War II veterans from the Third District of Arkansas. These veterans did not previously receive their medals because of an oversight when they returned home after the war.

The Bronze Star is awarded to World War II veterans who earned the Combat Infantry Badge or the Combat Medical Badge. The award of these badges is considered as a citation in orders of exemplary conduct in ground combat against an armed enemy.

The hard work of the Northwest Arkansas Veterans Task Force who brought this oversight to my attention made this ceremony a reality. They are

constantly looking out for veterans in our community, and their commitment to our veterans ought to be commended.

Mr. Speaker, each one of these veterans has a story to tell. Theirs is a special generation, the greatest generation, and we all owe them a debt of gratitude.

IN SUPPORT OF CONFERENCE REPORT ON MEDICARE MODERNIZATION BILL

(Mr. SULLIVAN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the conference committee report on the Medicare prescription drug coverage bill. This long-awaited legislation will provide a tangible, real and meaningful benefit to American seniors.

□ 1015

Senior Americans are tired of the talk. It is time for action. This bill will put a drug discount card in their hands in May, 2004; and it will help them save between 15 and 25 percent right off the bat. It also provides structure for Medicare. It includes an affordable deductible and catastrophic coverage, in responsible manner, to help the neediest seniors. Those who currently have prescription drug coverage can keep their coverage because this plan is voluntary. This is reasonable legislation that will not only improve and prolong lives of our seniors but will do the same for the Medicare program.

Provisions for reimportation are in this legislation, ensuring safety and accountability. And it also includes an update for oncology drugs that is critical to cancer patients nationwide.

In conclusion, I would remind my colleagues that this bill provides structure; helps seniors get the prescription drugs they need when they need them by putting a discount card in their hands; is voluntary; and is tangible. It ensures accountability for reimportation and, more importantly, makes Members accountable to their constituents. I urge my colleagues to vote for H.R. 1.

PEACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST

(Mr. WOLF asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WOLF. Mr. Speaker, the President gave an amazing speech yesterday in England, and everyone should read it. Consistent with that speech, I would now ask the administration to appoint a special envoy to the Middle East to focus like a laser beam on bringing peace to the Middle East.

Envoys for peace have succeeded in the past. Senator Mitchell succeeded in Ireland. Senator Danforth has helped push the peace in Sudan. Three people

that come to mind immediately for the Middle East are the President's father, George H.W. Bush or Secretary James A. Baker III or former Secretary George Shultz. Each would bring a unique ability to sharply focus, using the administration's road map for peace, on bringing peace to the Middle East.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF MOTIONS TO SUSPEND THE RULES.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 449 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 449

Resolved, That it shall be in order at any time on the legislative day of Thursday, November 20, 2003, for the Speaker to entertain motions that the House suspend the rules. The Speaker or his designee shall consult with the Minority Leader or her designee on the designation of any matter for consideration pursuant to this resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BASS). The gentleman from Texas (Mr. SESSIONS) is recognized for 1 hour.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, for the purpose of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. SLAUGHTER), pending which I yield myself such time as I may consume. During consideration of this resolution, all time yielded is for the purpose of debate only.

This rule provides that suspensions will be in order at any time on the legislative day of Thursday, November 20, 2003. It also provides that the Speaker, or his designee, will consult with the minority leader, or her designee, on any suspension considered under the rule.

Mr. Speaker, the Republican leadership of this House has set out an aggressive legislative plan for this week on behalf of the American people. The goal of this plan is to pass a number of bills over the next few days that will dramatically improve the quality of life for all Americans. This week we have already succeeded in passing an energy conference report that will bring our Nation's outdated energy policy into the 21st century through comprehensive legislation that promotes conservation, reduces America's growing dependence on foreign oil, and creates new jobs.

For the balance of the week we are slated to consider legislation among the following things: number one, to authorize spending levels for intelligence activities needed to win the war on terrorism; number two, to reform Medicare to make sure that more of our seniors have prescription drug coverage that they need while also giving them more and better choices for their health care coverage, also to allow all Americans to begin planning for their health needs through savings accounts that can be purchased, can

grow, and can be used on a tax-free basis; and, number three, to provide for a uniform national credit recording system that ensures that consumers are protected from identity theft while giving them access to the fast and reliable credit that makes our economy the envy of the rest of the world.

I understand that Members on both sides of the aisle may have different views about how to address these issues, and we will have the opportunity to hear a great deal of debate from both sides over the next few days on each of these issues and many others. However, a great deal of legislation that the Republican House leadership has also scheduled for consideration on behalf of all Americans has broad support from both the majority and the minority. And in an attempt to make sure that this important work is finished by the end of this legislative week as well, we are here to pass a rule to provide for consideration of these bills.

This balanced rule provides the minority with an ability to consult with the Speaker on any suspension that is offered, ensuring that their input and views are duly considered before any legislation is considered under this rule brought to the floor.

Mr. Speaker, I encourage my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to support this noncontroversial, balanced rule.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume, and I thank the gentleman from Texas for yielding me 30 minutes.

(Ms. SLAUGHTER asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, this unusual move to allow for consideration of motions to suspend the rules provides this body with a great opportunity. Many pieces of legislation important to our constituents are awaiting consideration. With this rule we have a wonderful chance to address some of these significant issues. We should consider legislation to extend Federal unemployment benefits for an additional 6 months; I believe that would pass unanimously. Currently unemployment benefits are set to expire on December 31. We should not allow the millions of Americans still desperately looking for work to begin the next year in the lurch.

I am particularly concerned about the loss of 44,000 manufacturing jobs in Upstate New York since 2002. In Rochester alone, manufacturing employment is down 20 percent. In these tough economic times, it is our duty to help; and since we are rushing to adjournment this week, this is our last opportunity.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to use this golden opportunity to pass the genetic nondiscrimination legislation. Since 1995 I have led the fight to pass this nonpartisan, noncontroversial, and

widely supported legislation. The bill currently has 236 cosponsors from both sides of the aisle, the support of over 200 outside organizations, and the support of the President of the United States. Last month the other body unanimously passed the legislation which prohibits genetic discrimination. This is critical to the health of the country, something we have talked about all week. If we do not pass this legislation to prohibit genetic discrimination, we are in danger of bringing much of the research that we are so proud of in the United States to a halt.

Discrimination is already taking place. We have lots of evidence of it both in employment and insurance. If we want to continue to be on the forefront of science and to be able to make our residents and citizens the healthiest in the world, this bill should be passed. I want to urge the Speaker of the House today to put this bill on the suspension calendar, let us pass it, let the President sign it, and let us all move toward better health.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. CORRINE BROWN).

Ms. CORRINE BROWN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding me this time.

I had not planned to come to the floor this morning, but I was sitting in my office and I heard my colleague from Florida mention Claude Pepper's name in relationship to this Medicare bill. Claude Pepper would be turning over in his grave by this bill. It was an insult to all of the fine work that Claude Pepper did in this House, and he would be on this floor speaking against this horrible bill.

This Republican Medicare bill is a slap in the face for every senior struggling to pay for needed medicine. The leadership of this House is not pushing this bill because they care about seniors. In fact, they would end the program altogether. In 1995 the majority leader called Medicare "a program I would have no part of." Another leader said "a program that I hope will wither on the vine." Now they want us to believe the spin that they really care about Medicare.

A zebra cannot change its stripes, Mr. Speaker, and the American people are not buying this sham. America's seniors are happy with the Medicare program, and we should provide for a prescription drug benefit the same way we provide for doctor visits through Medicare and not through a private program that even the insurance industry says will not work. This is a life-and-death issue for many of our seniors, and this hollow bill does nothing for that.

And I want to close quoting the only black Supreme Court Justice we ever had, Thurgood Marshall. He said: "A snake is a snake. It does not matter whether it is black or white; if it bites you, it is the same." And I can say that for the Republicans on this bill, and I can also say that for AARP, who has left the people.